

THE DIRECTOR OF
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Deputy for National Intelligence


22 December 1977

NOTE FOR: The Director

You asked whether we thought it would be appropriate for you to brief the President on the implications of Brezhnev's long-standing proposal for banning weapons of mass destruction.

We have prepared the attached memorandum for your information, but we do not believe the subject warrants a Presidential briefing.

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Robert R. Bowie

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, NFAC

The DSI through [] requested (via telephone, 16 December) that we prepare a short brief to answer The President's question of whether or not the Brezhnev proposal for banning mass destruction weapons and systems should be dismissed out of hand.

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The attached memorandum indicates our view that while the proposal has high propaganda value for the Soviets, it probably should not be seen as limited to that purpose. Rather, it may constitute a continuing Soviet offer which the US can take advantage of, if deemed appropriate, to begin more narrowly focused discussions on areas of weapon limitations not presently being negotiated.

S. N. GRAYBEAL
Director
Strategic Research

Attachment:
As stated.

Date

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THE DIRECTOR OF
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Deputy for National Intelligence

NOTE FOR: The Director

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You requested that we prepare a Presidential Briefing on whether Brezhnev's June 1975 proposal for banning mass destruction weapons could be dismissed.

The attached proposed briefing suggests that the Soviet proposal probably is not limited to propaganda purposes. It may constitute a continuing Soviet offer to formally discuss limitations on various aspects of modern armaments not presently being negotiated.

ROBERT R. BOWIE

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20 December 1977

Proposed Presidential Brief
on
Soviet Proposal to Ban Mass Destruction Weapons

1. The Soviet suggestion that the superpowers reach agreement to ban "new categories of mass destruction weapons and new systems of such weapons" has probably been put forward and used, we believe, as

--a genuine, but not highly coordinated, Brezhnev initiative, perhaps reflecting his personal interest in limiting development of new weapons,

--a general propaganda device which would serve the USSR in good stead on disarmament questions, and

--perhaps, as an offer which the US could take advantage of to initiate US-USSR discussions on limitations of any aspect of armaments not already under negotiation.

2. Brezhnev Initiative. The proposal was originally suggested in June 1975 by General Secretary L.I. Brezhnev in a speech to his "constituents" during the "campaign" preceding the elections to the Supreme Soviet. Brezhnev did not stipulate what weapon systems would be covered. In a subsequent conversation Brezhnev assured two visiting US Senators that he, in fact, had no specific weapons in mind when he spoke. Initial Soviet press coverage and private Soviet discussions, moreover, indicate that the initiative was not carefully worked out in advance and that most Soviets had no real idea of what systems were meant or how to treat the initiative except in vaguely positive terms.

3. Propaganda. The initiative has received wide Soviet press coverage serving as a propaganda device supporting Soviet positions in disarmament discussions. It has been used in various modes ranging from general

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press commentaries to diplomatic presentations at the UN since the fall of 1975, where the proposed ban was included in Soviet sponsored draft agreements. The initiative, moreover, has served to generate Western commentaries speculating on possible areas the West might pursue in advanced weapon systems development.

4. Since about early 1976 Soviet media have approached the topic on three levels:

- simple citation of the general formulation,
- commentaries suggesting the inclusion of US Trident submarine, B-1 bomber, MX missiles, cruise missiles, as examples of "new systems of such weapons", and
- articles which, following Western suggestions, list among possible "new types of weapons" such items as radiation, infrasonic, genetic, ethnic and psychotropic weapons.

5. Outstanding Offer. The Soviets may have hoped, moreover, that a comprehensive suggestion might elicit some positive Western reaction on specific points for future arms limitation talks. Brezhnev, for example, in a speech on 24 February 1976 noted that the USSR had made the proposal, that it had not been withdrawn, and that it was in the hands of the US. A year later, referring to the US SALT proposals presented by Secretary Vance, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko at his 3 March 1977 press conference said that while the US had proposed a clause limiting the development of new types of weapons, the Soviets had already made a proposal on banning new types and new systems of weapons of mass destruction. He said that if the US agreed on banning such weapons, it should use the Soviet draft as the basis of discussion.

6. The Soviets may see the initiative, aside from its propaganda value, as an outstanding offer which the US can still use to initiate future talks on limiting aspects of armaments not under negotiation. In the fall

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of 1976 the US considered and rejected a Soviet proposal for bilateral discussions on mass destruction weapons because of skepticism that the scope of the Soviet approach and the broad prohibitions envisaged could be adequately defined and verified. In March of this year the US agreed with the Soviets to hold bilateral negotiations on eight arms-related subjects such as anti-satellite weapons development, ICBM test notification, and chemical and radiological warfare. This development may contribute to a Soviet impression that Brezhnev's original initiative continues to form a basis for inducing more narrowly focused negotiations on other areas of weapon limitation.

7. There is no evidence that the initiative is related to "Peanuts".

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SUBJECT: Proposed Presidential Brief on Soviet Proposal
to Ban Mass Destruction Weapons

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OSR/SEC/P [] (20 Dec 77)

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